

'Financial burden but no choice', say traders on Marathi signboard rule

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A DAY after Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation said that all shops and establishments in Mumbai – irrespective of size – should use Marathi signboards in Devanagari script predominantly, the federation of retail traders said on Thursday that while changing the display boards would cause inconvenience to them, they had no option but to abide by the new rule.

Meanwhile, the restaurant association has asked for the display boards in English to also be displayed prominently along with Marathi script. "The industry is in full agreement with the

decision for establishments to maintain Marathi signage displays in Maharashtra. However, Mumbai being a cosmopolitan city, the English signage size should be prominent. We should also consider that Maharashtra gets lots of foreign tourists from all over the world and it's for their benefit that English signage should not be dwarfed. Also, the implementation should be gradual as huge costs are involved in making changes to the existing signage displays which would be an additional burden for the industry already reeling under a severe financial slump," said Pradeep Shetty, Senior Vice President, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI).

"It might take approximately six months to change the signboards...the duration and costs will differ depending on the size and design of signboards," added Shetty.

Failure to comply with the rules would attract a penalty up to Rs 1 lakh and a fine of Rs 2,000 per day would be imposed in the event of continued non-compliance. The BMC note issued on Wednesday said the amended rule would be applicable immediately. However, BMC officials said shops, restaurants, bars and other establishments would get "some time" to change the display boards as per the new rule. The civic body didn't specify a time frame for implementing the change.